



Position Statement

Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Inc.

In Support of:

Raised SB Bill 775, An Act Increasing ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CONNECTICUT HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY and H.B. No. 6155 (RAISED)

AN ACT REDUCING THE INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION UNDER THE STATE-FUNDED HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY

The CT Association of Agencies on Aging represent older adults in every city and town in the State of CT. By federal mandate as outlined in the Older Americans Act, Agencies on Aging assess the needs and then develop, implement and monitor plans to improve older adults access to community-based services. In the southwest and south central region, we are the designated contractors for the CT Home Care Program for Elders.

The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE) serves an essential preventative function in providing home and community-based services to older adults that forestalls the need for more costly nursing home placements. C4A respectfully urges the Committee to support proposals to expand access to the program, of which Raised Bill 775 and 6155 are examples.

Since 1987, Connecticut has elected to offer care management and home and community-based services (HCBS) to eligible older adults through a Federal 1915(c) Medicaid waiver (the Waiver). As a complement to this program, Connecticut has also appropriated General Fund revenues in support of serving older adults at higher asset levels than are permitted under the Waiver. These two components make up the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE).

In 2010, the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE) has an active client population of over 13,500 individuals, more than 9,000 of whom received services through the Medicaid Waiver. In the CHCPE Annual Report to the Legislature for SFY 2008, the Department of Social Services documented cost savings to the State of \$101,931,462. Breaking out this figure, average monthly costs per client in 2008 were as follows:

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Waiver clients: \$1,643; State funded clients: \$882. In 2008, this compared with an average monthly State portion of nursing home cost of \$5,691¹. State support has ensured that eligible individuals above strict Medicaid asset and income limitations can access the CHCPE on a rolling basis and that there is no wait list. This program allows older adults manage some of their long term care needs with their own assets while receiving the preventative long term care services that keep them at home.

In the 2009 session, the Legislature imposed new cost sharing requirements on the state-funded clients of the CHCPE. In the 2010 session the cost sharing requirement was reduced from 15% to 6%. The new cost-sharing requirements have influenced participants to opt out of receiving services under CHCPE. Older adults who are surviving on fixed income budgets cannot bear additional cost sharing. Already burdened with significant out-of-pocket expenses, including over-the-counter medical supplies, utilities and food, recipients erode what little they have to live on each time a co-payment is made. Home and community-based care is often principally described in terms of its cost efficacy. Surveys and anecdotal data show that consumers overwhelmingly prefer to receive needed services at home in the community. Through these services, an individual can 1) preserve the right to live as s/he chooses; 2) assist to the extent of ability in planning the course of his/her care; 3) retain immediate contact with loved ones; and 4) safeguard both health and dignity.

Diverse groups including the State of Connecticut Long-Term Care Planning Committee, the Nursing Home Transitions Work Group, and research institutions have emphasized the many benefits of community-based care. Ongoing efforts to shift both state policy priority and expenditure of Medicaid dollars to care at home reflect these commitments. As the Legislature frames the biennial budget, we respectfully urge its members to make rational investments in the preventative function that is served by the CHCPE. Investing in low cost home and community-based care plans for elders in need will forestall the need for much more costly and burdensome care in nursing facilities.

1 -The Average CT Nursing Home cost for a semi-private room is \$9,959.33/month. If the individual is Medicaid eligible, the State is responsible for approximately 50% of the total cost. *Office of Policy and Management, Policy Planning and Development Division - Health and Human Services.*
http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2995&q=383422&opmNav_GID=1814

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